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# **WHO IS BEHIND COVID-19 DISINFORMATION/MISINFORMATION IN AFRICA?**

## DISINFORMATION vs. MISINFORMATION?

DISINFORMATION: False information which is intended to mislead, especially propaganda issued by a **government** to a rival power or the media

MISINFORMATION: False information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead. Frequently commercially motivated



# WHO IS SPREADING DISINFORMATION AND WHY?

## Russia

- *Wants to undermine public trust in Western countries, sow panic, breed distrust.* <https://tinyurl.com/yx42jzyh>

## China

- *Is trying to rewrite the history of its handling of COVID-19. Focus on efforts to stem the disease, provide aid, instead of as the originator of the virus.*  
<https://tinyurl.com/y8qw7d52>

## Iran

- Seek lifting of economic sanctions



## STATE-SPONSORED DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

**USAGM  
Digital.Trends  
Newsletter**

### GOAL:

TO TAKE THE ROLE OF GLOBAL  
"SAVIOR" AND VICTOR OVER THE  
PANDEMIC, "COUNTRY THAT  
HAS CAPTIVATED CRISIS."



METHOD:  
**MEDIA MANIPULATION**

### GOAL:

- SOW DISCORD AT A TIME OF  
HEIGHTENED TENSIONS
- HEIGHTEN CORONAVIRUS  
PANIC IN THE E.U. AND THE  
UNITED STATES



### METHOD:

**FAKE STORIES AND  
ALARMIST MESSAGES:**

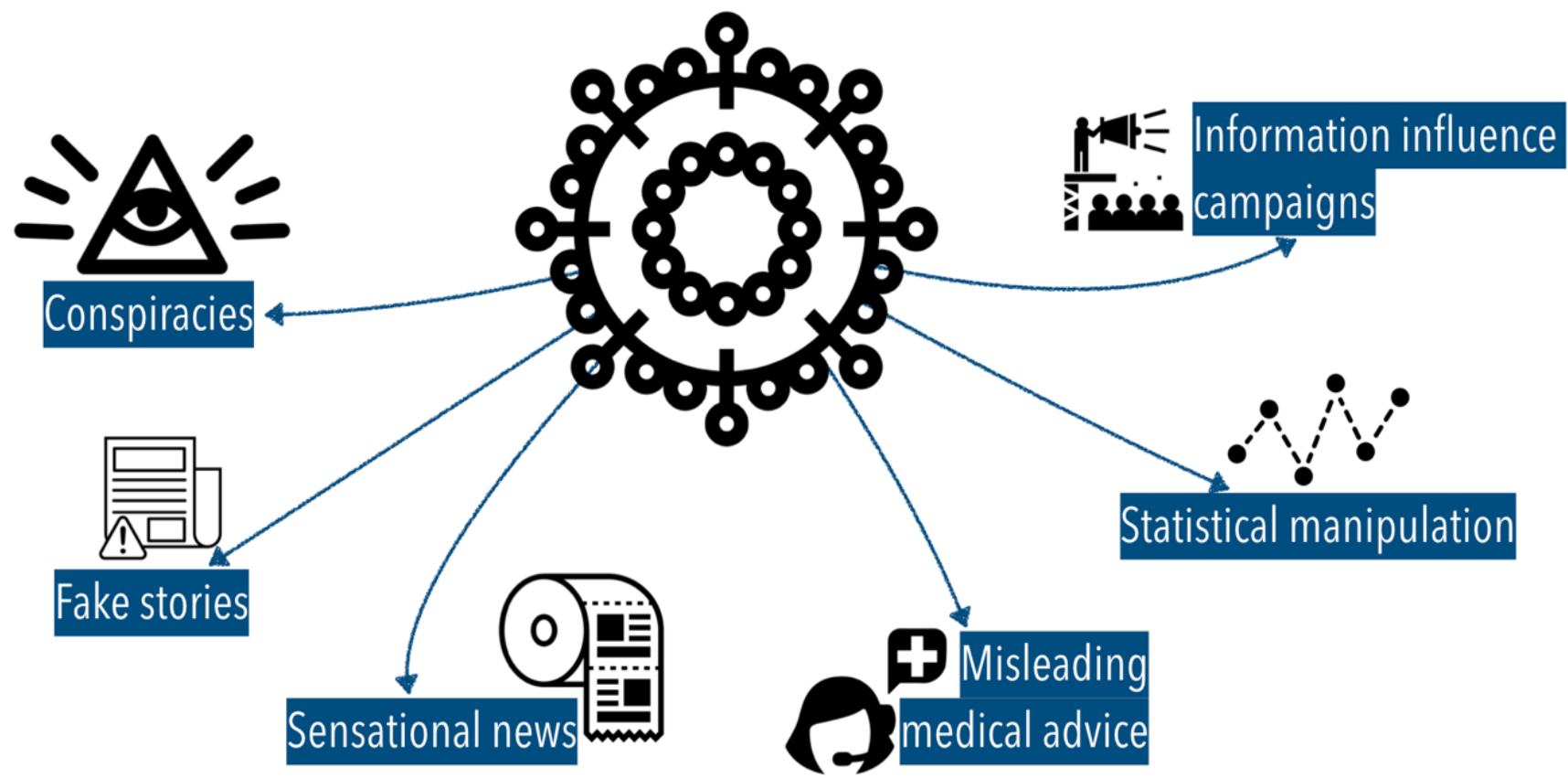






# TYPES OF DISINFORMATION DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC:

**USAGM**  
**Digital.Trends**  
**Newsletter**



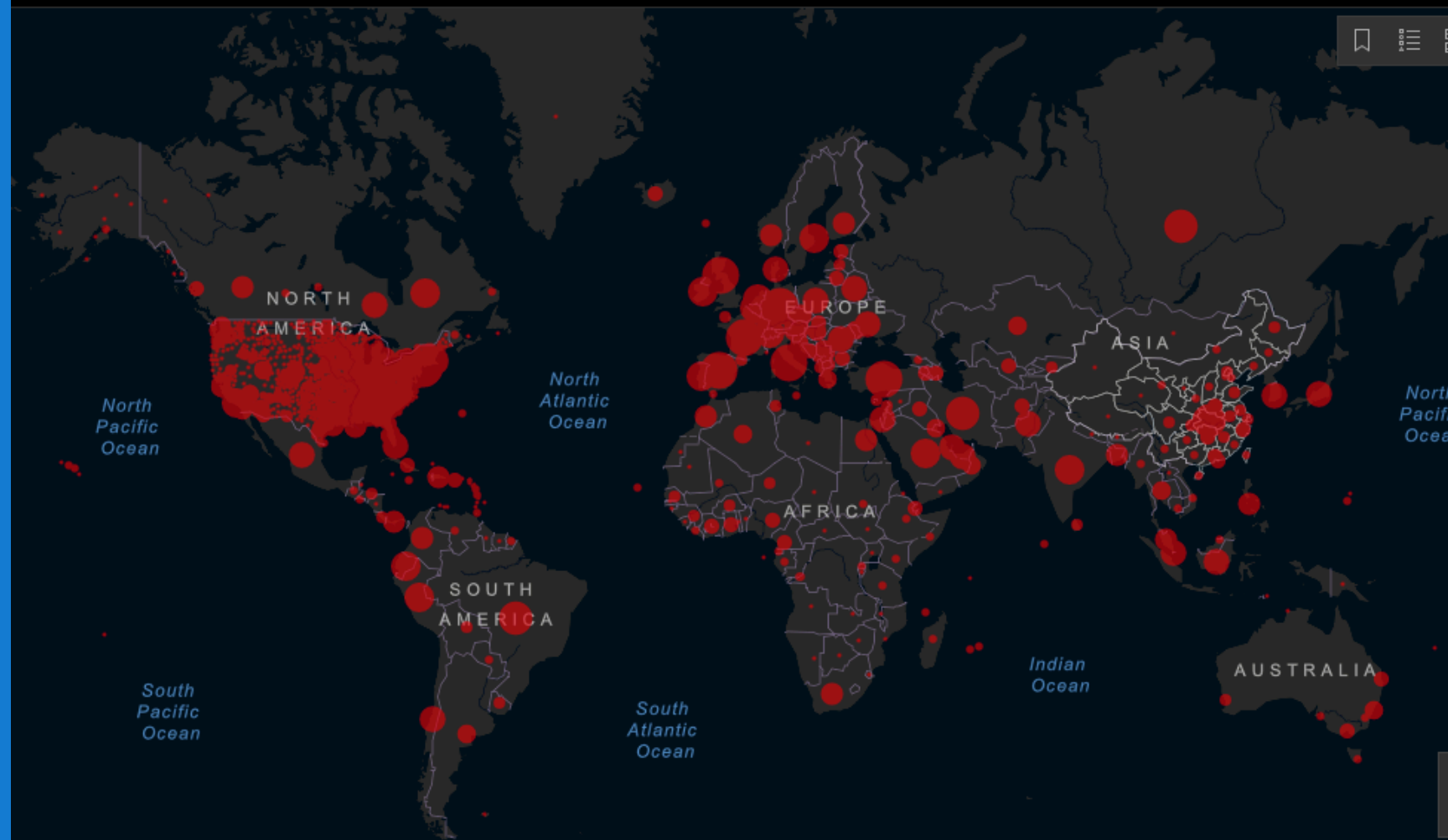
# WHY TARGET AFRICA?

## *Overall Goal:*

1. Damage Relations with the West
2. Question motives for vaccines, health care
3. Exploit Lack of Scientific information

*Russia:* Expand influence in key countries

*China:* Prevent a backlash that hurts economic ties



Cumulative Confirmed Cases

Active Cases

Incidence Rate

Case-Fatality Ratio

Testing Rate

Hospitalization Rate

**185**  
countries/regions

Lancet Inf Dis Article: [Here](#). Mobile Version: [Here](#).  
Lead by JHU CSSE. Automation Support: [Esri Living Atlas team](#) and [JHU APL](#). Contact [US](#). [FAQ](#).  
Data sources: [WHO](#), [CDC](#), [ECDC](#), [NHC](#), [DXY](#), [1point3acres](#), [Worldometers.info](#), [BNO](#), the [COVID Tracking Project](#) (testing and

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# Facebook Shuts Russian Disinformation Networks Targeting Africa With New Tactics

| **NEW FRONTIER** |

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Audrey McNamara Reporter

Published Oct. 30, 2019 12:42PM ET





A worker of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) works at a temperature control point at the Bole International Airport, in Addis Ababa | Eduardo Soteras/AFP via Getty Images

## Coronavirus ends China's honeymoon in Africa

Beijing has spent billions to win friends and influence politics in Africa. But the virus is threatening to upend years of careful work.

By **SIMON MARKS** | 4/17/20, 2:11 AM CET | Updated 4/17/20, 9:47 AM CET

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Africa was supposed to be China's new stomping grounds. Instead, the novel coronavirus has spawned a growing backlash that threatens to unwind the ties Beijing has carefully cultivated over decades.

South Africa + 37 more

# Efforts to Contain Coronavirus Spread in Africa Undermined by Misinformation

Source: [IPI](#) • Posted: 9 Apr 2020 • Originally published: 9 Apr 2020 • Origin: [View original](#) 

by Philip Obaji Jr.

With [11,000 cumulative cases](#) confirmed in Africa as of today, the novel coronavirus pandemic is expanding across the continent. It may only be a matter of time before the number of cases begins to resemble that of Europe, or even the United States.

As the number of infections and deaths grow daily, so also does public anxiety, particularly in rural areas where primary health care is often lacking. The continent, just like the rest of the world, is struggling to contain the spread of the virus. But the problem is made worse by a familiar enemy during pandemics: misinformation.

**Primary country:**  
[South Africa](#)

**Other countries:**  
[Algeria](#) / [Angola](#) / [Cabo Verde](#) / [Cote d'Ivoire](#) / [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) / [Equatorial Guinea](#) / [Ghana](#) / [Guinea](#) / [Kenya](#) / [Liberia](#) / [Mali](#) / [Mauritania](#) / [Mozambique](#) / [Nigeria](#) / [Rwanda](#) / [Senegal](#) / [Sierra Leone](#) / [Somalia](#) / [Tanzania](#) / [Togo](#) / [Tunisia](#) / [Zambia](#) / [Zimbabwe](#)





# MISINFORMATION FOR PROFIT AND GAIN

## Fake Cures and Treatments

1.

Natural remedies,  
saunas, vodka  
can cure the  
disease.

2.

Promoting  
untested drugs as  
a cure.

3.

Blue masks are  
made in the West  
and contaminated  
with toxins

4.

Panic buying,  
phishing attacks.

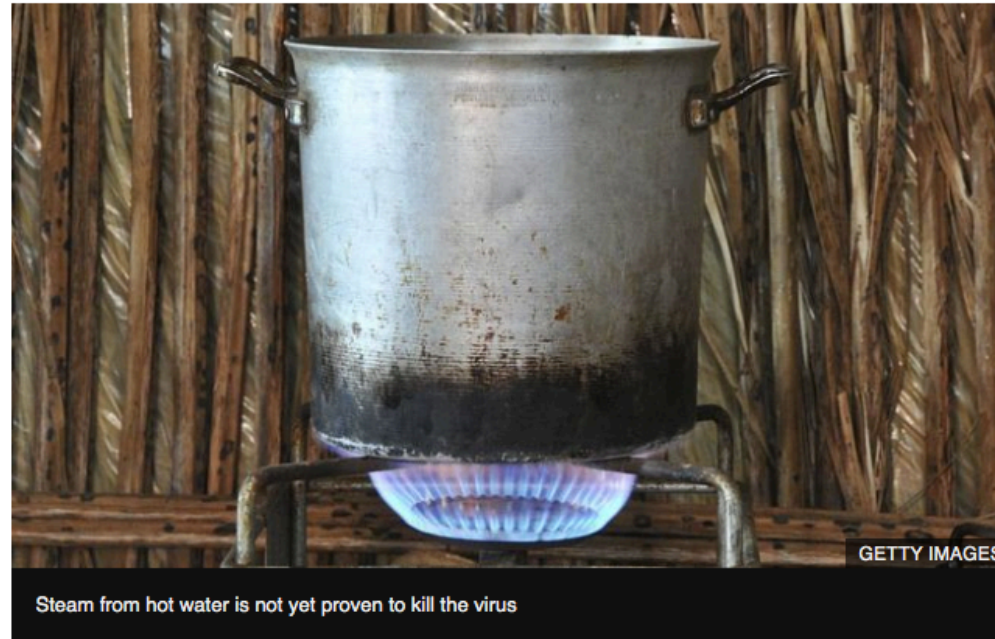
# Coronavirus: What misinformation has spread in Africa?

By Reality Check team  
BBC News

🕒 24 April 2020

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Reality Check



**African countries are experiencing a rise in the number of new coronavirus cases, and many governments have been enforcing strict social distancing measures.**

As they prepare for a surge in cases, misleading information has been spreading throughout the continent.

## 1. Inhaling very hot steam is dangerous

The false claim that inhaling steam is an effective treatment against coronavirus



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# WHY DOES FAKE NEWS FLOURISH IN AFRICA?

1.  
Distrust of  
Government  
(often with good  
reason)

2.  
Economic  
challenges in the  
time of COVID

3.  
Rapid Spread of  
Social Media,  
particularly What's  
App

4.  
Unknowns about  
the virus

# Arrests mount as Africa battles a des

## 19 disinformation

**GEOFFREY YORK** > AFRICA BUREAU CHIEF  
JOHANNESBURG  
PUBLISHED APRIL 7, 2020

3 COMMENTS

SHARE



00:00

Voice

1x



People partake in a public fitness program on a pedestrian bridge in Abuja, Nigeria, despite a 14-day lockdown and physical distance instructions, on April 7, 2020.



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# HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF DISINFORMATION?

## *The Media's Role in Fighting the Scourge*

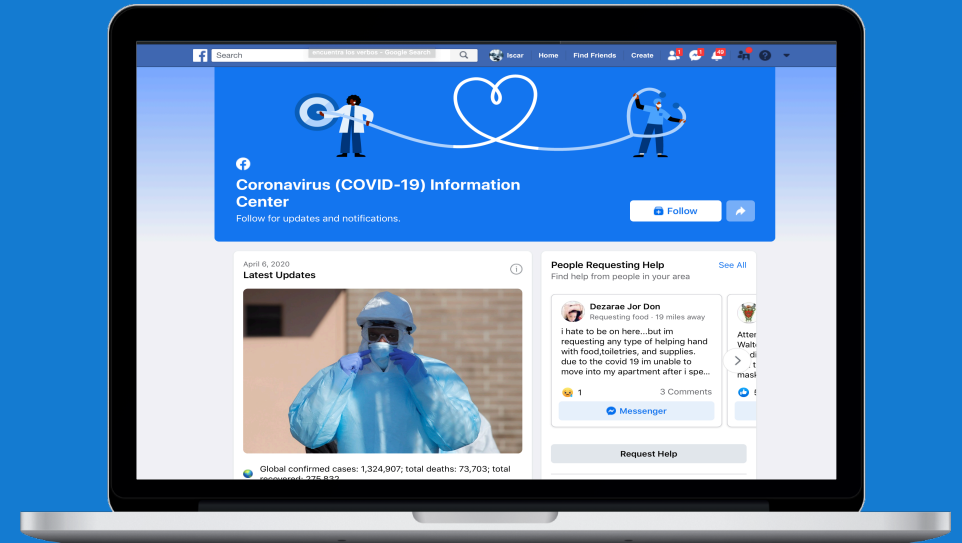
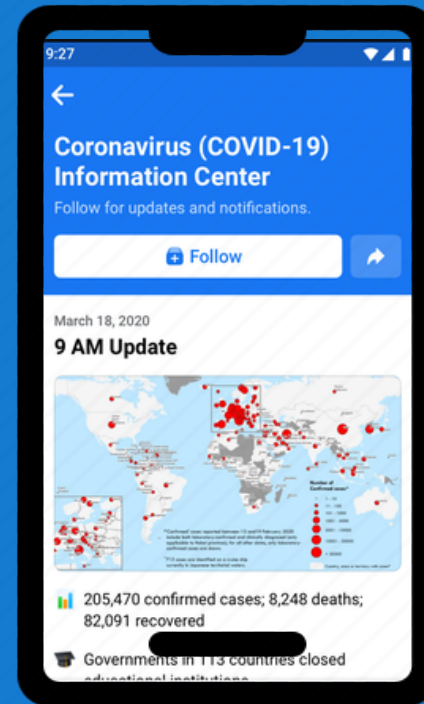
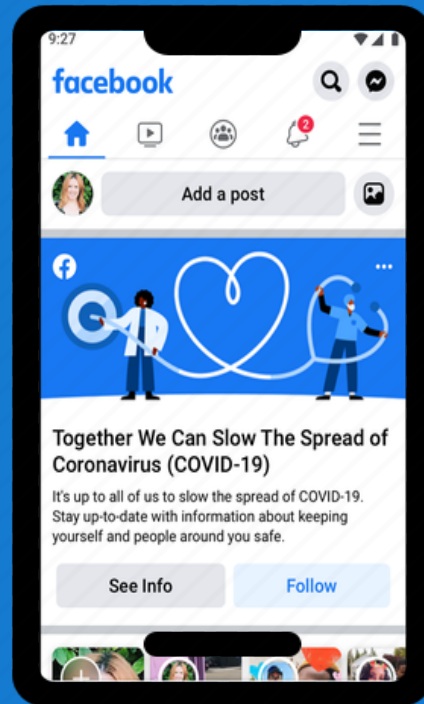
1.  
Public  
Education:  
Engaging the  
Community

2.  
Media Literacy for  
All: Distinguish  
fake from real

3  
Exposing  
Disinformation

4.  
Stop Passing  
Disinformation.

# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS RESPOND



## USEFUL FACT-CHECKING SITES

- First Draft News ([www.firstdraftnews.org](http://www.firstdraftnews.org))
- The Week in Fact-Checking ([www.Poynter.org](http://www.Poynter.org))
- Factcheckingday.com (<https://factcheckingday.com>)
- Facebook (Coronavirus Information Center)
- Twitter (#Covid19)
- The News Literacy Project ([www.newslit.org](http://www.newslit.org))
- Snopes ([www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com))

## ***WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?***

1.

Rely on verified  
information and  
reputable  
websites

2.

Question  
statistics, models  
and polls

3.

Call the experts. Get  
differing views

4.

Stop feeding  
clickbait



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To inform, engage & connect people around  
the world in support of freedom and  
democracy.